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Trace amounts of radioactive materials found in Fukushima kids' urine



Pylons and a blue tarp mark the parts of a nursery school playground pronounced off-limits after the discovery of a radioactive "hotspot" there, in Noda, Chiba Prefecture. (Mainichi)

TOKYO (Kyodo) -- Trace amounts of radioactive substances were found in urine samples of all of 10 surveyed children from Fukushima Prefecture in May, where a crippled nuclear power plant is located, a local citizens group and a French nongovernmental organization said Thursday.

David Boilley, president of the Acro radioactivity measuring body, said at a press conference in Tokyo that the results of the survey on 10 boys and girls in Fukushima City aged between 6 and 16 suggest there is a high possibility that children in and near the city have been exposed to radiation internally.

The citizens group, the Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation, comprising parents in the prefecture, said the finding is "certainly" due to the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant crippled by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

The group added it will urge the central and local governments to have all citizens in the prefecture undergo detailed tests soon using whole body counters.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano said later in the day at a press conference, "The government is concerned" about the finding. He added the government wants to obtain detailed results of the survey so they can be thoroughly examined.

Edano said the government also intends to accelerate work to analyze similar surveys conducted by itself and Fukushima prefectural authorities.



A worker from the Japan Atomic Energy Agency measures radiation levels in a sandbox at the Fukushima University-affiliated kindergarten in Fukushima on May 8, 2011. (Mainichi)

According to the urine test, 1.13 becquerels of radioactive cesium-134 per 1 liter of urine, the largest amount for the isotope among the 10 surveyed children, was found from an 8-year-old girl, while the largest amount of cesium-137 at 1.30 becquerels was found in a 7-year-old boy.

Acro also investigated radiation exposure of children who resided near the site of 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

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